

Unitarian Church

Questions and Answers

Q. From 1973 until 1975 the CIA felt ill enough of Torrijos to suggest his overthrow because of narcotics pedaling. Now what is the CIA's stand regarding Torrijos?

A. In answer to your question, I have to start by saying I'm not sure I agree with your premise but I don't know the facts of what your saying and what/in 73 - 75 happened but I can tell you very candidly that our evaluation today is that we have no evidence that Omar Torrijos the leader of Panama has been involved in drug trafficking. There is some evidence that members of his family may have been, we have no evidence that he personally has been so involved.

Q The goals that you stated to share a greater amount of confidential information with the American public, is certainly a lofty one. I wonder by what process you see the determination of what should be shared, how is that to be made? Secondly, I would appreciate it if you would comment on the recent court decision regarding Richard Helms and what you feel that means in terms of our thinking.

A. Well, let's take them one at a time. That's a big order. All right, how will we determine what can be shared? I described for you the process whereby something can be boiled down to an unclassified form and still be meaningful. And I can give you no specific formula for this. I can only say we have to apply our best judgment on what will endanger the United States interest if we release it and in some cases I make that determination myself when its

teetering on the edge in the other cases I don't have to become involved. I will have to say to you that the essence to being a good intelligence officer that you have to be as the producer said in quotations, able and able. You have to be willing to stand up and be counted, ~~xxxxxxx~~ In behalf of the energy report we issued, it generally is supportiv e of the President's energy program. I am prepared to stand up and be counted when other reports we have prepared don't go along with the administration's policy, we have to do that.

On Mr. Helm's, I'm neither here to praise or condemn him or any of my predecessors, but I have two reactions to the Helm's _____. First, as I assure you as one of his successors I had received a clear reminder that none of us in intelligence or in any area of your government is above the law, or entitled to lie. On the other hand I express my relief and pleasure that the country will not have to undergo a trial at which I would very likely have to educe evidence, documents, materials which would be injurious to the interest of our country and our relations abroad. It is a constant problem we have of whether the prosecution is worth the damage that would be done from the information that would have to be released. It was avoided in this case, as I say a reminder of the sanctity of the law has come with it.

- Q. You have a code of ethics now which prohibits the staff from making _____
- A. Yes.
- Q. There is nothing in the code of ethics about clandestine operations overthrow of foreign governments, operations in Chile, it's conceivable that the NSC would okey such a program
- A. It comes under the category which I mentioned under Covert action. Yes, the National Security Council (end of side A of tape) I have no specifics of prohibitions on that, I'm sure that will be one of the issues discussed when we negotiate with the Congress the charter for intelligence agencies.
- Q. This is _____ of international war though if such an operation would occur in Iran, Guatemala or Chile should occur again in the future _____
- A. I'm sure all those things are taken into account by those who will make the decisions on whether or not we should do this _____ If it's appropriate, and if the countries feel that should actually be inscribed in the law, we will get them to read one of these charters. As I say there are risks here, definition risk of establishing inscription of that specific prohibition that would not perhaps prohibit other things that even you would want to do. Let me point out, I raise it very seriously this issue at the National Security Council meeting just the other day. I support the prohibition on assassination, but I once read Webster's dictionary which says assassination is an attempt to kill secretly or surreptitiously. ^{something like that.} And I said to myself, there are some German commandos down in Mogadisho, Somalia some weeks ago, they went into an airplane and with stealth and secrecy killed a bunch of hijackers, and all of us applauded. It may technically have been an assassination,

I think we can find ways legally to perhaps do that kind of thing if we have to, but it's a delicate point, you have to watch each one of these if you write rules as you are sort of suggesting.

Q. With what you know of the Russian economy and its oil reserves, at what point in time do you think Russia might get interested in our Alaskan oil _____

A. I think never, never for a couple of reasons. The cost, the risk would be extreme and the benefit would be very slim. We're very grateful to have the north slope and have the Alaskan oil, but it is a drop in the bucket in terms of the world oil demands, the world oil problem that we have facing us today.

Q. _____ explain the 10 percent error in the CIA's study of the Soviet grain problem.

A. Yes. I'll start off by saying, we're never perfect. We missed by 10 percent _____ but still we weren't quite accurate. On the other hand, we make mistakes, and I'm proud of the fact, however, that in the last five years, since we were taken in by the Russian grain deal of 1972 we have, both the Dept. of Agriculture and Central Intelligence Agency developed ways of doing this predicting. We've been closer to right before--10% is, as some people say, close enough for government work. Seriously, we like to do better we expect to do better, but I would say with pride--well, we missed the grain production prediction, we did predict starting early July the Russians were entering the grain market of the world and buying much more than was anticipated, and as a result there has not been, I believe a skyrocketing grain prices as there was

in '72 because the market anticipated this race on the predictions partly ours, partly others, and therefore we have not suffered a big loss as it was so-called in 1972.

Q. You mentioned that certain modus operandi of the Agency that was acceptable 10 or 20 years ago is possibly not acceptable today even in changes in public opinion, and I'd like you if the same statement might apply to the Agencies in Russia, China, and Cuba. in your opinion.

A. Well certainly not as much so as in our country, but we have seen some evolution and redirection of their activities. I think the world climate does have an impact on them in some, but to a lesser and retarded extent. _____ the free way in which we make our decisions on what we'll do with intelligence, as opposed to the dictatorial way that they do.

Q. Richard Helms was the link between the CIA and the Watergate. Do you think Helms told that Presidential Commission everything they and the public needed to know about Lee Harvey Oswald and the death of President Kennedy, and secondly there have been stories recently about the CIA's MKULTRA program which _____, has CIA used MKULTRA in any executive action, in other words, political assassination?

A. Answer your question - in the first place - yes, in the second place no. I've researched the Kennedy assassination within the CIA and all the information we have is clearly available to other people. I mustn't be quite so flippant in the sense that I haven't specifically researched Helms vs the Warren Commission and who told what but everything that we have has been made available. Your news service did not break the story on MKULTRA, I broke the story on MKULTRA because when I found there were documents concerning this drug activity which had not been uncovered when they searched for them several years ago and turned over what they could find to the Church Committee, I immediately went to the Congress with these documents and said, here they are, I want you to know that we found these

squirreled away in our hidden archives out in the country, it didn't have any really new information, it had further details on them. There is no evidence, in any event, that material on those drug activities was used in a political action whatever.

Q. Admiral Turner, you did not resign from the Navy as many expected you would at the time of your appointment and prior to confirmation. I was hoping you would share with us this evening some of your thoughts as to why you did not resign from the Navy and your thoughts on the historic division between the military arm of our government and the civilian arm of our government.

A. Yes, there is one very clear reason that I did not resign or retire from the Navy, and that's because the law of the land -- the National Security Act of 1947 says expressly that the Director of Central Intelligence may be selected from among the ranks of the active or retired officers of the armed services, or from civilians. When the law of the land says an active military officer may hold this position, and somebody comes to me and says in the name of civilian control of the military you should resign and become a civilian, I would say that would be a great slur on my profession if I then admitted that I cannot perform this role in accordance with the law of the land. Secondly, intelligence supports the military, the ambassadors, the President, the congress and the public, all of whom have an interest in it. And it is very desirable in my opinion, from time to time, to balance the biases that everyone of us has in conducting intelligence. Two of my predecessors were professional CIA intelligence officers, clearly they had certain biases, clearly I come with certain military biases. Now, what really happens is that the fellow with the military biases leans over to the civilian direction and the guy with the civilian bias probably leans over to the other direction, but I think it is very useful to have some kind of alteration of this control. I'm the sixth person of the military to hold this office.

Q. Would you answer allegations that the CIA has members of the press in its past operations and why?

A. I would answer that allegation by saying we have a very clear and

firm policy today, that we will have no paid or contractual relationships with any member of the American media, television, radio, newspapers, journals of any sort. We simply will not use people in this profession as intelligence agents. At the same time, let me say, that I treat you, _____ and others as citizens of this country, and I feel you have the privilege, in fact in some instances almost the obligation of sharing with your government information that you have that you think is of value to the government. Therefore, if you voluntarily come to us and offer information that you have, whether you're in the media, the clergy, the academic world or elsewhere we would be delighted to talk with you.

Q. Would you share with us some of your thoughts as to why the Russians might use microwaves in our embassies, what they hope to achieve by it and what your feelings are as to the _____

A. I think it is typical of _____ they are less humane, less considerate, less fair in the kind of activities they conduct in the intelligence world. ~~It's difficult to know precisely~~ It's difficult to know precisely what their aiming with this. We do not believe it effects the health of the people there. It happens that our standards for radiation of that type and the Russians are apart by a factor of 1,000 and they keep the radiation below their standards. This country would be subjected to much higher radiation within the legal limits. Granted they are trying to interfere with our activities inside the embassy. We hope that they will desist in this and it is difficult for us to find a precise way to order them to do so. There will be, I think, some public announcements on this before too long, but just what the national policy is I really can't quite anticipate that.

Q. You mentioned earlier in your talk that there were people running around who had taken it upon themselves to release confidential or classified information with great damage to our country. I wonder if you could be more specific with what things in the recent past might be in that category.

A. Well, Mr. Agee writing books naming hundreds and hundreds of CIA employees. Put yourself in the shoes of a young man or woman, college graduate with 2 or 3 years of work, comes into the Central Intelligence Agency to be one of our clandestine overseas people. Somebody who has to be disassociated from the CIA in the public mind, to be able to do his or her job effectively. Then along comes somebody like this who writes a book, and maybe this person got an investment of 10 or 15 years in this profession. Suddenly, his or her value to the Agency and the country has been reduced by some very large percentage. Now, anywhere he or she goes they are very likely to be identified easily and their effectiveness as an intelligence person reduced. It's heartbreaking for people like that. If you went into a profession and have something totally external to your activities, just cut off your opportunities very early.

Q. Admiral, by the way, may I say welcome home _____
laughter _____

A. Some people that's so laughter _____

(Cont) I've read some things about the ICBM system as opposed to the polaris system and there is one thing that disturbs me--as I understand our ICBM system it requires a presidential clearance before and ICBM missile can be launched and a polaris, as I understand it does not require it, the presidential clearance, it goes through a series of _____. My concern is that someone could conceivably capture a polaris submarine or turn them around and turn them on our own country.

A. Yes, first of all you're not quite accurate, there's very expressed presidential role over the polaris missiles just as much as over the land based inter continental ballistic missiles that are in silos in our country. It is a very clear line of command. Secondly, within a polaris submarine you have to have two separate people obtain the signal, open the safe and get out the materials and bring them together before you can launch, and thirdly, technically it would be, I believe, almost impossible to reprogram that out at sea- to fire on the United States, I think it is quite out of concern.

Q. Cannot hear

A. We feel it is our obligation to keep our decisionmakers as close as we can on events all over the world. I can't make any specific comment on any specific country, but that is one of our overall responsibilities.

Q. _____ the disclosure by Agee of a list of CIA people abroad, drew a lot of pressure on the CIA. I think, correct me if I'm wrong that Richard Welch assassination in 75 _____

A. I think that's fall of 75 .

Q. Continued _____ muffled can't hear.

A. It's utterly beyond my imagination that the CIA blow one of its finest officers away.

Q. Cannot clearly hear what person is saying.

A. I was stationed in Naples at the time, and his widow came through on her way from Athens Naples/and I went to the hospital to see her and commiserate with her because I was the senior American in town and she put on a pretty good act, that's all I can say.

Q. How can we trust the new regime at the CIA as opposed to the past and I was trying to see in my mind how would I develop a yardstick for the CIA in the future, and I suppose the most important thing for me would be to hear your public announcement and see your action to follow, and further to lay your views on the public record to see how (muffled)

A. It's been my policy, after I completed 6 months in this job I thought I should keep my nose to the wheel for the first 6 months and try to get _____ on the position, since then _____ once every five or six weeks and this is my third out of four lectures this weekend and I have four more in early December. Two one day

and two the next and I want very much to keep in touch with the American public--the young man's question/ ^{about James Bond} is something we can laugh at, to the degree that the American public perceives that we are operating in James Bond ways is a problem for me and we have to grapple with this. Yes, I want to stay out in the limits with my very, very busy schedule and keep in touch. I want to talk to young people and get their attitude and get some of those top young graduates

Q. Recently, in a recent issue of the U.S. World and News Report, and it mentioned, and I may be wrong that 200 agents had recently been fired from the CIA and they called it the Halloween Day Massacre--can you comment on that.

A. Yes, I would be happy to. It's really wonderful, the same press that one day will criticize that the CIA had done wrong, I now suddenly find ^{them defending} ~~out that considering~~ the size of the CIA

In particularly they came along the other day and said they
~~xxxxwanted-to-add-more-senior-spies;-they-were-happy--~~

wanted to have more snior spies, they were unhappy to find I was firing people that had 25 or 30 years of service in the Agency.

When I took over the CIA I found that my predecessors had started a program of reducing in size by something like 800, perhaps a little bit more, because there was a large build-up from Viet Nam for this covert action type activity that I described did not come back down, but there had been a much larger cut in regards to Schlesinger's tenure, but it still hadn't come down far enough, and I have yet to find one person at CIA who feels we should not reduce. Now, the people who are going to the news magazines today, no, let me go back a step. I announced the reduction of 800 in August and there were no complaints, nobody

disagreed that this was necessary. You can't have overstaffing and have good morale. Not with good people, our majority of capable people want to be fully employed, they do not want to be over supervised and that's what we've got today with 800 and some excess people.

However, I told them all _____ and the 2nd increment in June of next year, and there were no complaints until that first _____ and now there are 198 unhappy people and I had no way to avoid that and I wouldn't think you as taxpayers would want me to carry 800 people on the payroll for indefinite periods of time when they were in fact reducing our effectiveness and that's what I've done, I'm unpopular for it but I'm not there to be popular, I'm there to be efficient for you.

Q.

A. From what I read of Judge Johnson I feel like I could harmonize with him, well, I've only met him once for about 5 minutes--he hasn't been to Washington very much. He seems like a very delightful person to me. We must work closely together, the two agencies have a great deal in common and have to have teamwork effort. Specifically, we have what we call counterintelligence, countering the efforts of other intelligence organizations that penetrate our society and obtain information from us. Recruit spies inside the United States, and so on. We are responsible, at CIA, for any counterintelligence activities abroad. We do not operate in the United States, the FBI does here. It's like the old football hand-off. Foreign agents working in some foreign countries, if the CIA handles him if he gets on an airplane going to the United States we have to hand him over to the FBI because we are not allowed to do ----- so, we must work closely together and there

is close cooperation but I am really looking forward to Mr. Johnson getting here and our establishing the teamwork we will have to have over the next years.

it's getting quite late
The last question or two,/I know it's Sunday night and you have
to work tomorrow

Q.

Can you give us some insight into what measures you are taking to see that an organization as far flung as the CIA is within your control.

A. Yes, the first thing I did was I hired a gentleman whom I had known in the past who had no association with the Agency, his integrity and morals I hold in the highest regard and I said, you are going to be my surrogate for looking into the whole clandestine activity, and I don't care how long it takes you or where you have to go, here's a carte blanche certificate--go out and look and come back and tell me when you are satisfied or if you find things I must do something about. It took him about 6 months and he came back and he said to me, here are 11 notebooks with descriptions of what he had found. I went through every one of them I didn't find anything that I felt was _____ or needed major surgery, adjustments here and there, I was very content with the way the place was running under control and the way we want. Beyond that, with this delicate responsibility we have, you can't be in my shoes without going to bed every night and saying to yourself, what does my intuition tell me I should look into tomorrow, and then you go to bed the next night and you say the same thing. And lastly, you must set an example, you must set an example of firmness with regard to that which you want. I have

used the extraordinary power that I have been given by the Congress, by the National Security Act of 1947, and I dismissed 5 people summarily in the nine months I've been there because they lied, and because they acceded their authority, and I can't have that going on and feel it's under control.

Q.

A. No, I can't really address that in detail, because of leaks, and that would be a detailed discussion of all the intelligence techniques we've got, that's the kind of information we have to keep secretive. We will be working with the Congress on these charges and if the Congress decides that is specifically prohibited, they'll put it into law and we'll follow the law.

Last question please.

Q. _____

A. Yes, yes, that is just exactly the kind of thing we do provide assessments to our _____ we try to provide assessments to what a country's reaction will be under different circumstances. Now, I really can't share with you what's going to be given on this particular view because it's obviously very sensitive and delicate, but that's our responsibility to try to keep the decisionmakers posted on that very kind of subject.

I really enjoyed being with you, and it's most important to us when we get this kind of exchange and feedback, and questions....cut off.